2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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Juok, "May Juok guard you," while a sick man may cry, *Er ra Juok*, "Why, oh Juok?"; but on the whole, Juok is so linked with Nyakang in the Shilluk mind that he is seldom approached in prayer without the mention of Nyakang (and sometimes of his son Dag). Indeed so obvious is this association that the Rev. D. S. Oyler writes: "They never pray to God without invoking an intercessor," [1] and gives the following prayer as an example:—

> "We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawng you are the ones who created, people are in your hands, and it is you Nikawng, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the river is yours, you who are Nikawng. You came from under the sun, you and your father, you two saved the earth, and your son Dok, you subdued all the peoples. The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you . . ." [2]

We do not know of any definite evidence of sacrifice to Juok only; even in the all-important sacrifice for rain Nyakang is also invoked. Juok, vaguely associated with the firmament, is recognized as the creator, though now showing but little interest in his creatures. The prayers offered directly to him, collected by Hofmayr, are such dance songs as the following (we have paraphrased Hofmayr's literal translations):—

> "I pray to God (Juok), God the Giver (Juokatang), God the Protector (Juokagim); I have taken [God] to me and have become fearful to my enemies so that they scarcely dare attack me." "The Shilluk when satiated chatter like crows, they forget Juok; the Shilluk full of beer forget Juok." And a song composed by King Yor: "I pray to Juok alone for he directs the spears, spear thrusts are of Juok." [3]

Two subsidiary uses of the word Juok may be mentioned. There is an expression *pan Juok*, "the country of Juok". We formed the opinion that though this implied no local habitation it was vaguely associated with the dead; Hofmayr is more definite, regarding *pan Juok* as the place of Nyakang and the ancestors, to be reached after many months journeying in the bush. Certain diseases may in a general way be described as *juok* (though each has its own name), this term also being applied in folk-tales to men possessing supernormal attributes. Summing up, we may say that Juok is the Creator, perhaps vaguely associated with the firmament, but certainly having

[1] "Nikawng's Place in the Shilluk Religion": *S.N. & R.*, i, 1918, 283.
[2] Loc. cit. [3] Op. cit., 197–201.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives. Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river. Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular development, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

Hofmayr states that the *bareth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiyo, if a girl Nikaiya.[1] When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *bareth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *bareth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.[2]

There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is, as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

[1] Op. cit., 277. [2] Hofmayr, op. cit., 291.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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756 waning, but when it was suggested that perhaps an *ajuago* might then have connection this was strenuously denied.

753 Perhaps the commonest cause of sickness was the entrance into a person of the spirit of one of the divine kings, a cure being effected when the spirit could be persuaded to leave its involuntary host. [643] We believe that only the early kings were thought to produce illness in this manner, and certainly the three or four cases into which we inquired were all said to be possessed by Dag. One of these cases, [751] a woman who recovered after two sheep had been sacrificed to Dag, wore bead anklets, and amidst the beads there were threaded small pieces of the conchae of the ears of the goats. These anklets were considered protective against future possession by Dag.

695 Oaths are sworn by Nyakang, or on one of the holy spears from the shrine of Nyakang. Westermann notes that the latter form is used only in judicial procedure: a sheep is killed, and both parties are smeared with its blood, after which they swear by the spear, perjury being followed by death. In swearing by Nyakang his name is often coupled with that of one of the villages in which he has a shrine, e.g. a man may swear by Nyakang of Akurwa. The early kings may also be invoked by name, especially Dag.[1]

695 773 Reference has been made to the cattle belonging to Nyakang and kept at his shrines. In common parlance these are "cows of Nyakang", but besides these there was a mythical herd of mysterious cows from the river also known as the "cows of Nyakang", and from their dung were obtained the "ashes of denying", described by Westermann as follows:—

> "Once Nyikang caught a cow in the river. . . . It had no ears or horns. This cow was the beginning of a sacred herd. . . . They live in the river and come out to feed at night. . . . some say the Dervishes took them, while others affirm that it was the Turks. . . . The ashes were made by burning the dung of the sacred cattle. They are preserved at Wau and other villages dedicated to Nyikang, and are applied in . . . cases of adultery. . . . When the woman has confessed, but the man denies, they take recourse to the 'ashes of denying'. An old chief, taking a spear in his hand, stands erect, and offers the following prayer: 'You Nyikang, the ashes are yours! If this man has not had intercourse with this woman may he escape! But if he has had intercourse with this woman, may he die! If this woman accuses falsely may he escape!' After this the chief takes some of the ashes on his hand and strikes the man with it. Then the one who has sworn falsely, will die."[2]

[1] Op. cit., xliii. [2] Op. cit., xliv.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

are increasing in numbers. The average number of children reared in one family may be from three to four. The number of children born by one woman is not low; women with ten children are no exception. But as a rule no more than three or four children grow up to maturity in one family, the rest dying from want of reasonable nursing. If in course of time the natives are taught to take better care of their children, the population will no doubt strongly increase. A cause of the low birth rate in many families is the fact that a man is not supposed to have intercourse with his wife while a baby is nursing, that is, till the baby is from two to two and a half years old. They consider it a great shame for a woman to become pregnant before this time has elapsed. If such a case happens, they generally will say that the woman has committed adultery.

OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE

The Shilluks are tall in figure, the average height of the men being nearly 1.80 m.[1] They are generally lean, rather narrow in the shoulders, and have but thin calves; their arms and legs are long, especially the legs below the knees and the forearms; hands and feet are small. A characteristic posture of the Shilluk man is to stand on one leg, and bending the other, press the sole of his foot against the inner surface of the knee, while one hand holds a spear stuck into the ground; he will stand thus for hours, looking admiringly at his cattle. They are very clever in running and jumping, and are capable of sustaining considerable fatigue.

Their skin is dark, almost black; albinoes seem to be rare. The physical appearance of the Shilluks is not that of pure negroes, they might rather be called negroids, in spite of their dark colour. Most of them have a fierce, sometimes a proud, haughty look. The cheek-bones and lips are protruding, but not excessively; the nose is flat, but high noses are not infrequent. Young people of both sexes are finely built, while in old age they generally become very thin and bony. Their gait is erect and elastic.

PAINTING THE BODY

What makes the Shilluks look most ugly and almost frightful in the eyes of a newcomer, is their habit of smearing the whole body. While the lower part is covered with ashes, the breast and head are painted with red earth or with chalk, or, if they can afford it, with oil or butter. Sometimes the whole body is painted white or red, and lines or figures are drawn across the face.

EXTRACTION OF INCISORS.

Like most Nilotic negroes the Shilluk remove the lower incisors; this is done in early childhood; its omission would, in the belief of the natives, cause sickness; for instance, a case occurred where the teeth were taken out to cure sore eyes; a woman who had just had them removed from her child, said that unless they were taken out, her child would undoubtedly be deformed in some way, when it grew to maturity. Another explanation for extracting the teeth

[1] Five feet ten inches.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

776 [761] [576] [753] [114]

latter; when a person is ill, they may say: *gɛ̱ jwɔ̱k* "Why, Jwok?" The sudden and violent death of a man is regarded as being caused by Jwok. But I do not think there is any ethical motive in our sense underlying this belief; Jwok has simply killed the man for having offended him, probably without knowing it. The name of Jwok is used in a favourable sense in the following phrases of salutation: when a person arrives, he is saluted: *yí kɛ̱l jwɔ̱k* "you have brought Jwok"; to one starting on a journey they say: *yi nɛ̱tɛ̱ jwɔ̱k* "you may hold fast Jwok". — Jwok has also the meaning of "sickness"; the reason for this is the conviction that Jwok is the causer of sickness; "he is sick", they express by "he has Jwok", "Jwok is upon him".

Although the Shilluk does certainly not connect with the word Jwok the same notion as we do with "God", Jwok is doubtless the only word fit for being used in the Christian sense. It is true the word occurs in stories in rather a disrespectful sense, any being with more than natural powers being called a Jwok; but this is so in analogous cases with many African peoples, and will almost always be so in heathen languages; it can therefore not form a real obstacle for using the word in Christian preaching and literature.

[In older literature the name Kelge appears as that of the "creator of the Shilluks." I have never heard this name].

773 NYIKANG, AND THE ORIGION OF THE SHILLUKS

The tradition on the origin of man or rather of the Shilluks leads to the second and most important part of the religious practice of the people, viz. the worship of Nyikang. This tradition runs thus: A white or rather greyish cow, *ɟeaṅ aduk*, came out of the river; she brought forth a gourd; when this gourd split, a man and animals came forth out of it (vide page 178). The name of this man was *Kɔlɔ; Kɔlɔ* begat *Omaŋ*, who begat *Wat Mɔ̄l* ("son of *Mɔ̄l*"); *Wat Mɔ̄l* begat Okwa. Okwa used to go to the riverside; here he met repeatedly two maidens who had come from out the water, they were very beautiful and had long hair, but the lower part of their bodies was like the form of a crocodile. One day Okwa seized the girls and carried them away. Their screams brought out their father, who till then had not been seen by Okwa. His face and the left side of his body were like human, but his right side was green of colour and had the form of a crocodile. When asked he declared his name to be Odiljil, he protested against his daughters being taken away by force, but afterwards consented. Okwa married the girls. The names of the two maidens were Nyakayo and Ongwat (*Ñakāyɔ* and *Oŋwɔ̄t*). One of Nyakayo's sons was Nyikang; according to some this was the eldest child, while others say he was the youngest. Nyakayo had more children beside Nyikang; of one son the name is known, he was *Omɛ̱i*; the names of her daughters are (according to A. E. S.) Ad Dui, Ari Umker, and Bunyung. Okwa's second wife Ongwat gave birth to one son, Ju or *Buoŋ*. Okwa married

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

*539 755 a goat is brought, and a skin-cloth, and a ram, and a knife, and a round spear, and a certain (kind of) grass, and a fan, and a gourd. The ram is laid on the earth at the door of the hut, with its belly turned upwards. Then the sick man is brought, he sits down on the belly of the ram, his wife is placed behind him (on the ram), and his youngest son in front of him; thus they hold the ram fast, till it dies. Then they rise, the belly of the ram is cut open, the contents of the stomach are taken out and smeared on their bodies (of these three persons). The heart also is cut out, and the bowels. The hoof is cut off, and these things are buried at the door of the hut. Now the medecine is crushed, it is mixed with water, it is given to the sick man, and drunk by him. And they string beads, red ones, their name is *γĕrǫ*, they are tied about his back. The fan is cut in pieces, and the gourd too, and the grass is taken, and brought into the bush on the pathway, it is thrown on the pathway; water is poured into the gourd and thrown on the ground. The round spear is taken by the sorcerer, so are the hoe, the knife, the meat, and the ram.

[756]

24. Sicknesses.

●753 827

dwālǫ the abdomen is swollen, pains, diarrhoea.
tǫ́n heart-ache, pulmonary
dńd̄ńǫ̀ cold, catarrh. [disease.
dnʃkǫ̀ insanity, lunacy.
owin wich giddiness.
dtǫ̀gǫ́ teeth fall out, pains in the bones.
àlât dropsy, hydropsy.
àdòń pains in the buttocks.
dkágǫ́ rheumatic pains, chiefly in the legs; feeling cold.
ɟ́ǫ̀u guinea worm, Ferendit of the Arabs; filaria medinensis.
àmɛ̀ɔ̀l swelling of knees and
lǫ́i leprosy [elbows.
ńóńò a disease of the head, the hair comes out in consequence of ulcerous inflammation.
ajańkobyɛ̀t the skin peels off.
lĕr caries.
wàń a kind of light leprosy.
kwɛ̀m kwɛ̀m swelling of the shinbone.
kamír salt-rheum, "lupus".
ajɛ̀gǫ̀ small-pox.
àbíp a sickness manifesting itself in strong fevers, generally mortal, chiefly children suffer from it.
gi bwǫńǫ "thing of the stranger", that is: of the Arab; siphylis.
kàjéjǫ̀ inflammation of the finger-joints; parts of the finger rot off.
dńd̄ch inflammation of the joints; of the toes.
ànū̀n gonorrhoea.
bòr boils.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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shɔ̀ltík the same as *àmwɔ̀l*, but it is curable, *amwɔ̀l* is uncurable.

dwâdɔ̀ a kind of leprosy on the foot, takes a long time to heal.

míɲm the skin becomes rough, squamous.

ʈàwó-shín diarrhoea.

ràm diarrhoea.

chɔ̀rɔ̀ blindness.

ŋgi-ŋgɛ̀n eyelashes get red, fall off.

ŋɔ̀lɔ lameness.

díɔ̀n thigh-bone is affected, it is mortal.

duoń disease of the outer ear, chiefly of children.

gwɔ̀ɲɔ̀ itching.

àdwàń "a cripple who never walks".

àtàkɔ̀ hunch-backed.

byér a disease of cattle and men, pains in the back.

but the usual fine for making another man's wife pregnant consists of three cows and one bull; if pregnancy does not result the fine is two head of cattle. Fines for seduction are paid to the girl's father and vary from one to three head of cattle according to whether or not the girl is made pregnant. If a woman has committed adultery, she confesses it at the time of childbirth; her husband then exacts the appropriate fines from the men concerned.

If children have been born outside marriage the eventual husband may take them over and will pay extra bridewealth cattle. Failing this, they are brought up in the *gol* of their maternal uncle and belong to his clan. He will receive the bridewealth paid on the marriage of the girls.(1)

Widow Inheritance

According to Westermann widows are inherited by the brothers of the dead husband or by his sons, who take the wives who are not their own mothers. He then adds that, if children are begotten from these wives, they belong to the family of the dead man and "they are like his own children."(2) This custom of raising up seed to the name of the dead man is general among the Nilotic tribal groups.

KINSHIP AND KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Ora

The in-law relationship of *ora* has been commented on by Seligman and Pumphrey. It appears to have two particular applications, being used in a narrow and in a wider sense.

A man describes as *ora* all his wife's kinsmen and, strictly, all the kinsmen of the wives of the men of his own generation belonging to his own clan. This extension may be because he is allowed, at any rate in theory, to have access to the wives of such clansmen and temporarily takes over the in-law relationship with their parents. During the first years of marriage the members of the husband's *gol* have to respect and to avoid the members of the wife's *gol*. Pumphrey suggests that the basic reason for this is that the initial period of marriage is an unstable one and friction is gradually resolved as the bridewealth is paid off and children are born. To avoid friction the husband does not speak to his *ora* and meets them as little as possible.

In a wider sense the *ora* tie is connected with certain sex taboos. The breach of these taboos is believed to cause *dwalo* sickness, a form of illness believed to affect both mother and child who will die unless the man who induced the mother to break the taboo will split a gourd in two and sacrifice a sheep.(3) There are certain *ora* relationships between lineages and one lineage will be *ora* to another. Thus, if men of lineage A have married women of lineage B, C and D, there are *ora* relationships between A and B; A and C; A and D. In such a case no men of lineages B, C and D

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, pp.34-5.
(2) Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p.114.
(3) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.29.

582 613 835 could marry women from lineage A as this would prevent the correct working of the relationship of avoidance and would confuse the situation. Each lineage therefore develops a tendency to marry women of some other specific lineage,(1) but this is a traditional convention only and not compulsory.

In addition to the ordinary *ora* relationship between two lineages it is dangerous for a man to have sexual relations with a member of a lineage which is *ora* in the second degree. B, C and D may have an *ora* relationship, through customary intermarriage, with other lineages, E, F, G and H. If a man of lineage A seduced a girl of lineage E then all the men of lineage B would be offended, since they regard marriage with girls of E as their prerogative, and there is an *ora* relationship between the two lineages as there is through A and B. *Dwalo* sickness would result from [753] the offence in the same way as if a man had relations with a woman who was a blood relation.

Terminology

601 Pumphrey gives a list of Shilluk kinship terms,(2) among which may be noted the absence of any single word for brother, such a kinsman being described as father's son or mother's son. The Shilluk kinship terms used to describe members of the immediate family are extended to others of the same generation, and from this descriptive terminology a classificatory system is formed.

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

771 There are three major aspects of Shilluk belief and ritual; the recognition and worship of Juok, the cult of Nyikang and the kings in whom he has been reincarnated, and the cult of the ancestral spirits. In addition there are less important beliefs such as the belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

JUOK

776 [771] [782] The concept of Juok is found in many of the Nilotic tribal groups although beliefs concerning it vary. Among the Shilluk Juok refers to a spirit which is universal, formless and invisible like the air. Juok is above Nyikang and men though he is approached principally through Nyikang. The Shilluk perform sacrifices to Nyikang which cause him to move Juok to send rain, to prevent misfortune, remove sickness and so forth. Juok is so linked to Nyikang that he is seldom approached in prayer without mention of the latter as intercessor. Juok is vaguely associated with the firmament and is recognised as creator though he is believed to show little interest in men owing to his greatness which is so far above them.

Hofmayr(3) states that the Shilluk put adjectives to the word Juok in order to bring out one or other of his attributes:

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.30. (2) *Ibid.*, pp.37-9.
(3) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, pp.186-7 and p.193.

Juok *Ficere*, means a whirlwind;
Juok *Nan*, " river spirit;
Juok *Acweci*, " creator;
Jane Juok, " things made by Juok such as food etc.;
Juok *Tin*, " wood spirit;
Juok *Ayin*, " protector.

Anything that cannot be understood is Juok. Juok is thus a plurality but he is also one spirit; he may be either good or bad, or neither, he is potentially all three. He may bring sickness, may protect people or he may merely stand aloof from human affairs. Certain diseases are specifically associated with him. The cult of Juok is not expressed in any external action or ritual; it is found in a few songs and prayers, and Juok is invoked only when appeals to the ancestors and to Nyikang fail.

THE CULT OF NYIKANG

Nyikang is the hero of most of the Shilluk myths and traditions. He is the culture hero, founder of the nation, and the popular ideal, and though probably an historical person in the first instance, his acts and words have become sacralised in myths. The Shilluk regard him as a divine or semi-divine being. They say he did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind during a festival held at Akurwa. The spirit of Nyikang is supposed to be present in certain places, men and animals. Every *reth* at the moment of his installation, when sitting on the royal stool, is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang so that it is Nyikang who becomes king again (see above). The spirit of Nyikang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are regarded as his homesteads; in particular he is present, at certain times, in his effigy at Akurwa.

There are ten shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenyikang. Seligman describes them as a group of two or more huts, of the same circular form as dwelling-huts but slightly larger, enclosed in a fence of millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which projects the blade of a spear.(1) The huts are taboo to all except the priests of Nyikang and the old people who tend them. The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the shrines to Nyikang are known as *bareth*; they are the ex-wives of kings, people liable to epileptic fits (which are held to indicate possession by Nyikang or a dead king), and certain old men who appear, according to Seligman, to have a hereditary connection with the shrine. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices and officiate at the ceremonies. They eat the meat of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine.

The worship of Nyikang at his various shrines consists of sacrifices and prayers. The two most important annual ceremonies are the rain-making ceremony, held just before the rains, and the harvest festival, when the millet is cut and first-fruits are offered to Nyikang. Each new *reth* should send cattle to each shrine of Nyikang and also various other presents. Offerings are given at the shrines when a person is sick so that Nyikang should make him well. Offerings and ceremonies invoking Nyikang's aid are

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.77.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

cosmological system. *Juok* and Nyikang are the most general explanatory concepts the Shilluk have, *juok* or God accounting for the existence and nature of reality, and Nyikang for the way in which the Shilluk order and interpret it. Though Nyikang may be called *juok piny* (God below) he does not represent the totality of what the concept of God means to the Shilluk. God is also apprehended in other ways, and is addressed as God the Protector, God the Giver, God the Creator, and by other titles which correspond to the various situations in which the Shilluk need to invoke him, or explain effects which they attribute to him. *Juok* is thus a common explanation for illness, for the Shilluk seem to use this word to account for what is unknown in its nature but experienced in its effects.

The Shilluk God is the final explanation both for what is good and what is evil, from a human point of view, but he is not himself good or evil. Howell describes him as 'a remote and amoral deity . . . present to a greater or lesser degree in all things',[1] and there are many indications in the literature that it would be a mistake to understand, by the Shilluk word for God, a being which could be defined in ethical terms. It is well, in discussing Shilluk ideas, to distinguish their ethical from their religious conceptions; for though Nyikang is the foundation of and sanction for Shilluk customary behaviour, and God is the support of Nyikang, in neither case is there any emphasis on intrinsic ethical qualities. Nyikang is not the teacher or founder of an ethical system, and the attributes which he shares with God refer, not to judgements of ethical value, but to the nature of reality and its interpretation. In the biographies of the Shilluk kings their traditional reputations are not mainly founded upon whether they were just or virtuous, but upon whether the Shilluk prospered under them, whether they were effective in war, whether they were brave, and whether they were clever. Their caprices are also remembered.

Nyikang and Dak were the most important Shilluk kings and may be regarded as models of what the ideal Shilluk king should be. Some account of their lives has already been given, but it has perhaps not been made clear that the stories recorded of them emphasize their intrigues, deceptions, and intelligence, and the craftiness which seems for the Shilluk to be a sign of the particular gifts of God. Thus, in the story of the attempt by Dimo to kill Dak, when Nyikang made the effigy which was speared in Dak's stead, it is said that[2] Dimo said 'Nyikang is a fool, but Dak is full of talk', which means, says Oyler, that Dak was a man of ideas. He also says that Nyikang 'was an inventor, and many of the things in everyday use . . . were first made by Nyikang'. In their contests with Dimo, Nyikang and Dak show themselves both more powerful and cleverer, and in this cleverness they are alike. Dak particularly, the son who effectively succeeds his father and is second in importance only to Nyikang himself, is shown to be not only

[1] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 8.

[2] Oyler, 1918 (i), p. 108. In this account, it is said that Dak made the effigy, though in other accounts, e.g. Westermann, 1912, p. 139, Nyikang made the effigy.

Card No	C.I.	N.I.	F.I.	U.F.I.	S.(cm)	incisors	marks L	R	B	A	dots	C.I. max.	C.I. min.	N.I. max.	N.I. min.	S max.	S min.
B 7	73.6	88.0			180.8		+		+		26						
C 8	73.4	96.2			175.1			+	+						+		
D 7	67.0	88.7	89.7	49.6	174.6	+		+			28	+					
B 1	71.3	87.7			184.8		+				21						
D 9	67.4	79.2	93.0	70.4	181.1		+				31						
	71.5	87.9			179.2												
D 5	70.2	85.1			165.7	+	+										

The sign + means that the people practice knocking out lower incisors, or body marks.

L = Left upper arm and shoulder R= right upper arm and shoulder B= Back A= Abdomen

max maximum min minimum

Tribal Marks

The most important tribal mark among the Shilluk is one row of dots or scars on the forhead called TAI which extends from near the ear to the other ear, crossing the temples. The old generations have three rows of these dots.(12) Butt writes that "Shilluk men and women have three to five rows of dots or scars....(13) but I was unable to discover any Shilluk man or woman who had these five rows of TAI. Butt may have confused this scarification with that of the Baer and the Dinka who make five to seven deep cuts on the forehead. A profile of a Shilluk man or woman will betray a strong resemblance to someone who has a necklace of black or more beads stretched across his forehead. These dots are of no fixed number.(14) They vary according to the breadth of the face and the forehead. No Shilluk is exempted from this mark, but in my study I found one old fellow from the royal family (15) who happened to be born in Metemma, north of Khartoum, as his mother was taken captive during the Mahdi - Shilluk war. He lived about twenty years in the north, then he came home, even having lost his Shilluk tongue. He had no TAI.

The most important tribal mark is the knocking out of the lower incisors. Seligmann wrote (16) that the royal offshoots till the fourth generation "... follow the royal practice of retaining their lower central incisors instead of having them knocked out as commoners do..." Butt also says: " Among the Shilluk the royal family alone keep their teeth intact." (17) From the results I have obtained and illustrated in table "C" we can make two observations:

a) that not a l l commoners practice the knocking out of their incisors,

b) that some royal members practice it.

The Shilluk told me that this practice was universal among the commoners in the past, but now it is practiced at will. The old belief was that the failure to knock out teeth caused sickness. It must have been contact with the Arabs that changed this belief, and with this contact the habit is going to die out.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

754 The possessed is conscious of the fact that he has the power and may even mention the fact. The power is made operative by looking fixedly at the person to be made the victim. The person exercising the power is usually in anger when the deed is done. The person who is bewitched says the eye went into me, and if the person who did the deed speaks of it, he will usually say that his eye went into the person.

The evil eye does not always take effect in the same part of the body. If the curse falls on the eye, the person will have sore eyes terminating in blindness. They recognize three causes of blindness, other than accidents. [753] Blindness may follow the small pox, or measles, or else it is the result of the evil eye. When the evil eye strikes the ear, deafness is the result, and when it is on the head, sores and swellings appear on the head. When the body is affected, it is covered with sores. The intestines or the liver may be the part afflicted, and they swell to unnatural size, and the worst part about it is that the swelling is permanent. One young man, who was a very fine looking child, was afflicted thus, and ever since he has been out of proportion. The doctors called it enlargement of the spleen. A man who is a very swift runner may have the evil eye take effect in his feet, and in that case the feet swell, and the victim has trouble in walking. The curse may fall on the teeth, and they decay. The evil eye may strike the unborn babe, and it disappears. The most dangerous place to have the evil eye take effect is in the heart, and in case it does the victim can not live through the day.

The evil eye is not confined to the body, but it may also affect the domestic animals belonging to a person. When a person drinks the milk of a cow that has been touched by the evil eye, it causes his insides to swell. A [233] very fine appearing cow is not permitted to go into the village by herself but is kept with the herd, and she is to be kept in the middle of the herd so that she may not be seen, and the curse come on her. A very fine calf is always kept hidden. Sheep may become the victims of the evil eye.

The power extends beyond animate things to the inanimate. A blacksmith may make a very fine bracelet, and it breaks as he is putting it on the wrist of the owner. The bracelet was bewitched by the evil eye. When a very fine spear breaks when it is being polished just after it is made, it is because of the evil eye.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

As can be seen from some of the effects of the evil eye, the Shilluk's idea of sickness has much to do with the increasing of their belief in the evil eye. They do not think of a disease as being contagious so much, as they think of it being spread by some hostile agency. Some people carry their views to such lengths, that they are inclined to think that every accident, and every case of sickness is caused by some occult agency. The power may be exercised by some other agent than the person with the evil eye. 753 [754]

When a person is taken sick, all the symptoms are very thoroughly discussed by the people of the village, and if some mysterious features or circumstances are brought to light, it is immediately looked upon as a visitation from some occult power. Most cases of sickness present some puzzling features, and so it is easy to give credit to the evil eye for much of it. Most accidents occur not because someone was careless, but because some hidden power was invoked against the person. The patient is then taken to the good medicine man. He goes through certain forms to determine the source of the evil charm. He may decide it is from the evil eye, or from an evil medicine man. 755

When a medicine man undertakes to cure a case of the evil eye, he aims to do two things. The first is to cure the person suffering, and the second is to put that particular charmer with the evil eye out of business. A sheep is brought, and the medicine man heats a nail red-hot. With the nail he blinds the sheep. He then tells the patient that he is cured, and at the same time the burning out the eyes of the sheep is a type of what will happen to the person who cast the spell. His eyes will waste away. If the eyes of the person who cast the spell do not become inflamed, the cure does not take effect. When the person who casts the charm hears of the cure performed by the medicine man, he hastens to him at night, and beseeches him to spare his eyes. The medicine man exacts a good fee from him, and then assures him that he will save his eyes, but warns him not to do it again, and threatens to kill him if he sees him casting the evil eye on another person. 754 755

A person with the evil eye can cure a person who is suffering from the evil eye. Of course he gets a good fee for it. Before he takes the case he gets a small fee, such as a sheep or a hoe, and after the case is cured he

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

484 562 624 future expeditions of the same party she will be chief. In the village she has the right to judge cases that are strictly between women.

431 425 484 626 [535 513] A man may refuse to give an ox, making the excuse that he has nothing to give. Then the women will mutter, saying, "He kills us by making us stand in the hot sun." They seem to think he is cheating them. The man's wife may intercede on their behalf. She will put on her husband's cloth, put a rek about her neck, anoints her body with oil, and then takes the chief's spear, and dances among the women. For such a display the chief will usually relent, and tell his young men to bring out the ox. He may be very churlish, and refuse to give them what they desire. They depart, muttering curses on him and his family. If in a short time sickness should occur in his family it is attributed to the ill-[753 will of these women. He sends a messenger to call them. They come 755] and get the ox. He then tells them of the sickness in his family, and the women order ashes to be brought. The women fill their hands with the ashes. They then pray after this manner, "You are God. We were refused an ox by this chief. He now has sickness. We are no longer angry at him. Permit him to escape." Next they spit on the ashes they hold in their hands, and then sprinkle them all over the members of his household. The women then depart, and the patient recovers.

431 425 [789] When the women go to a chief and he gives them an ox, they sprinkle ashes about his house as a blessing. The ox is taken to their village, and it may be killed immediately, though it is more likely to be kept for a time. When the animal is killed the brisket is given to the old men of the village. The old women take the rump, and the younger women divide the remainder of the meat.

425 556 431 [533] A man is glad to have the women come to beg from him, even when he refuses to give them what they desire. It is a great compliment to have the women come, as it shows that his fame has spread abroad as a rich and generous man. Then, too, the ceremony is such as to feed the vanity of the man singled out for the honour. The women usually rush up to the house shouting and singing his praises. They sing songs about his bravery, and tell of his virtues, but the chorus of their song usually is: "Brother, lead out that ox."

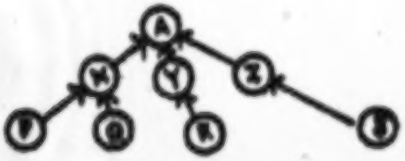
426 431 After a chief has given an ox, the women go away saying that he is a fine man, and a great chief. The women seem to demand a great deal. Once, in a case observed, the ox was given. The women did not watch

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

compulsory to comply. It will be seen later that it lessens the possibility of *dwalo*. 582 835 613 607

Dwalo[36]

In this diagram :—



X, Y and Z are, as before, *ora* of A (men of A having married women from them). X have married women from P and Q; Y have married women from R; and Z have married women from S. The entire membership of P, Q, R and S stands to *pur* A as *myer man ora*,[37] that is to say *myer ora* of the *myer ora* of A (or "villages of the wives of the *ora* of A," an exact translation of "*myer man ora* A"). To have sexual relations with a woman of a village which is thus *ora* of the second degree (*pa man ora*) is to break a taboo and incur the supernatural sanction of *dwalo* sickness.

The same sickness is said to be produced by incest or by a man having relations with a women to whom he is related; but it seems that the most grievous form is that incurred in the manner described. It will appear complicated but to the Shilluk it is a simple conception. Nothing is more important than to avoid friction with one's *pa ora* and nothing is better calculated to produce it than the seduction of a *pa man ora* girl. This may require explanation. As already said 182 582 607 613 835

36. *Dwalo* is a form of sickness which from a description of the symptoms would appear to resemble dropsy. Both the woman concerned and her child are affected, and it is believed that they will die unless the man who has seduced her in contravention of the taboo makes a prophylactic sacrifice by spitting a guard, killing a sheep and putting the stomach contents on top of the guard in the road-way, "so that the people passing-by may carry away the *dwalo*." [753] 755

37. *Myer* is the plural of *pur*.

25: Anonymous I-5 (no date) 1956 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 When the Reth's army begins to move out to meet Nyikango's, all the people of Debalo run away clapping the handles of their spears, meaning that the Reth will never return to Debalo until he dies. As he goes out a bull is laid down on his path, whereupon he walks over it in front of the procession, pulling another bull by the tail. The latter is covered with white cloths and is meant to reach Fashoda, being dragged in this manner—Fashoda is about two and a half miles from Debalo. The spear from the shrine at Bol and another from Lul are also brought for the coronation ceremony.

Now scouts are sent to see if Nyikango's army is approaching and to report the news back to the Reth. In the Reth's army the people carry some dura stalks representing spears with which they fight with the army of Nyikango by throwing them. The members of Nyikango's army carry long thongs of twisted grass which they use as whips to disperse the Reth's army, so that they will leave the Reth in [753 828] their hands to be taken by the spirit of Nyikango. The whips are filled with the spirit and the people are frightened by them, as being touched by the whip is enough to produce madness unless gifts are offered to Nyikango's people. Princes are not [644] allowed to go near the Reth during the procession, because if the Reth is killed by [669] any of them during the coronation procession from Debalo to Fashoda the coronation is not postponed, but the people at once seize a nearby Prince, or the prince who killed him, to replace the slain Nyireth—he is not yet Reth, as he has not been possessed by the spirit of Nyikango—and the coronation continues. Because of this danger during the procession the Reth has to be protected by his policemen and the senior chiefs, who keep the ordinary people away from him.

According to the custom, when the Reth's army reaches the dry khor called Archajur near Fashoda, which is the boundary between the two parties, a black bull is laid down. The Reth boldly walks over the bull and across to the other side to meet the party of Nyikango. As soon as they come near each other the two armies begin to fight, throwing dura stalks at each other. At that moment the Reth is seized from his army by the people of Nyikango and clothed with the spirit of Nyikango. Here Nyikango's army are busy sending people away with their whips so as to leave the Reth with the group of performers of the ceremony. After this he is taken to a round cleared place and circulated four times there before entering Fashoda. As this is done he is escorted to Fashoda by two holy maidens with the image of Nyikango [644] on his shoulder. These two maidens are taken from the performers of the coronation and later become wives to the new Reth.

In Fashoda he is taken in front of the Nyikango's shrine and placed on a silver coronation seat covered with white cloths, and the image of Nyikango and Dak are held over him in order that he might be possessed of their powers. With him are his sub-chief and the chief of Kwanyiyek holding the legs of the Reth as he is sitting on the seat. He remains in an open place for some time, with the group holding some [775] white cloths as a shelter around him. Meanwhile Nyikango's army beat their drums and sing Nyikango's songs. Here the Reth is said to be shaken by the power of Nyikango as he is being possessed by him.

643 After the performance of this, the Reth and his sub-chief are taken to one of 233 the roughly-made huts near Nyikango's shrine, where they stay for two days, with the Reth keeping the little herd of Nyikango's cattle which was brought from Debalo. This kind of action is done so as to obtain good fortune in the future during his kingship. Here he is treated as he was in Debalo, being made to do the work of a small boy, making fires for these cows and clearing their place. This work is done

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

755 to keep the disease from entering. The mother is warned against looking back.

[753] When a child cries persistently, with no apparent cause, they reach the conclusion that he is being drawn by one of the kings. The servant of the [754] king is called, and given a fee of a sheep. The parents say they want to know, who is drawing the child. The first thing to do is to take cowrie shells, and string beads on them. Each shell has a different coloured bead. The shells are named for their kings, and also for the deceased grandparents of the child. One shell is also put in for the child. The shells are [787] all taken in the hand, and thrown out on a skin. When they fall if another shell touches that belonging to the child, it is being drawn by the spirit of that king or person. The child is then given the name of the person [553] drawing it, and a cure is effected. If at the first attempt no one is indicated [782] the test is repeated until some one is indicated. All the people in the room then cower, and pray to the drawing spirit as the leader directs.

756 787 The servants of the king claim the power to converse with the dead. When a spirit is to be called the medium goes into the house with the relatives. She goes to one corner of the room and retires behind a screen. The door is closed to make the room dark. She then takes a gourd with some grain in it and twirls it to make a noise that will call the spirit of the departed. The spirit of the king then takes powerful possession of the medium, and she speaks in a peculiar voice. The usual thing is for the spirit to greet the assembled people, and they reply. The spirit then says: «Where I am it is nice, but I was killed by a certain person (naming him) [761] or I would not have died.» The death was caused by a charm cast on the victim. «I will kill that man, do not quarrel with him. When I finish [682] greeting you I will return.» Sometimes such a message causes the relatives of the deceased to try to kill the one who cast the charm.

756 766 787 An instance of their working is often given in this community. Two men made a trip to the Nuer country. On the return trip one of them, named Shol, was separated from his companion. The other man concluded that he had been killed by a lion, and returned with that report. The people of the village mourned him as dead, but they waited two months. Then a servant of the king was called. She went through the usual forms, and then exclaimed: «Ah the man». The spirit greeted the people, and

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter VIII

RELIGION

It is so easy to suppose, when speaking of the peoples who live in the continent of Africa as pagan, that they are without any religion at all and have no knowledge or recognition of God. Yet it is absolutely untrue of them all. Certainly among the Shilluk people there is not one, no matter how remote from Christian influence, who would not willingly subscribe to the first article of the Creed: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.' He does indeed believe in God, the Supreme Omnipotent Spirit, Creator of all things, Lord of life and death, the great Jwok-Atang. I once commenced instructing a dying Shilluk chief by asking him 'Do you believe in God?' He looked at me in wonder that I should ask so foolish a question, and replied 'Of course I do. All men believe in God.' And undoubtedly, to the Shilluk, God is very real. On entering a village, you are greeted in His name, '*Yi kall yi Jwok*,' i.e. 'God has brought you.' As you leave you are sped on your way with a prayer, '*Yi mith yi Jwok*.' 'May God guard you.' A person looking very seedy and sorry for himself will come and tell you that 'he has God', by which you immediately understand not that he has experienced a sudden religious conversion, but that he is sick. So too, good fortune and misfortune both are attributed to God, and of the latter, even the most crushing ones, the failure of the crops, the decimation of the cattle through plague, the death of a loved one through sickness or accident, although grieved over, are accepted resignedly as coming from God.

Yet here there is a great paradox, for although God is acknowledged by the Shilluk as the Lord of all things, and His name is so frequently invoked, yet He is not worshipped by the people and to Him no prayer or sacrifice is offered.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill, and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasions as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better thatching than that affected by the ordinary Shilluk and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Detwok. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth